

Development Challenges, South-South Solutions September 2008 Issue

Solar Power Bringing Light and Opportunity to the Poor

Meeting the South's energy needs will be crucial to achieving radical improvements in quality of life and human development. It is estimated that 1.7 billion people around the world lack electricity (World Bank), of whom more than 500 million live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa's greater global engagement and economic growth in the past few years has started to draw attention back to the continent's dearth of reliable power sources and inadequate power infrastructure. With demand for electricity growing fast, it is people running small enterprises and organizations - especially in rural areas - who often get cut out.

Being able to see at night unleashes a vast range of possibilities, but for the very poor, lighting is often the most expensive household expense, soaking up 10 to 15 percent of income.

There's a direct link between lighting and economic development. Each 1 per cent increase in available power will increase GDP by an estimated 2 to 3 per cent.

A reliable power supply helps people to work longer, important for small businesses, and this increases the amount of wealth that can be created. Lit streets are safer at night, and lure people outside to do business and seek entertainment. It makes it easier for students to study into the night, and in consequence improve their grades.

To take up this challenge, entrepreneurs are using different approaches across the South, to make solar power affordable and able to reach millions of poor people.

Marrying new lighting technology such as compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and light emitting diodes ([LEDs](#)) with [solar power generation](#), opens up the possibility to bring clean, portable, durable, low cost, high quality lighting to Africa's poor. These new lighting systems also come with huge health and safety benefits, compared to gas alternatives.

In Kenya, more than 80 percent of people lack access to the national grid and depend primarily on fossil fuels for their lighting needs, leading to respiratory diseases and environmental hazards associated with indoor air pollution.

Kenyan solar entrepreneur Charles Rioba of Kodesha Mwangaza - [Rent a Light](#) is impressed by the interest in solar power solutions. An expert in renewable technologies with 15 years' experience teaching in universities, he "realized that to reach the lower end of the market, one had to design an affordable solution."

"The biggest challenges faced are still affordability, and very little disposable income from the potential end users," he said. "We are currently discussing with a number of micro institutions who have expressed interest on coming on board on rolling out the project."

Rioba's business provides rental solar-charged Powerpacks designed to make electricity affordable for the majority of urban poor, rural households and slum dwellers. The rental system allows the consumer to rent a fully charged Powerpack from designated distributors in the neighbourhood, without having to invest in an off-grid power source, such as a solar panel. The project will set up 100 distribution agents and 10 service centers for the Powerpacks to reach approximately 8,000 households within 18 months. In addition the Powerpack will be used for mobile charging and powering radios, and hopes to create a new market concept for portable electrical energy distribution among the poor in Kenya.

"My model targets to reach the lower end of the market," Rioba said. "We are doing this by using existing businesses and groupings without creating new ones. We are also sourcing directly from the suppliers and we are working our project on numbers. In this way the margins are very low but aimed at achieving high usage hence return on investment."

Rioba has just been awarded funding by the World Bank's Lighting Africa initiative, which aims to provide up to 250 million people in sub-Saharan Africa with access to non-fossil fuel based, low cost, safe, and reliable lighting products and associated basic energy services by the year 2030. It uses equipment that can weather long-term use in remote and difficult areas, trains people to service the equipment, and comes up with commercially viable business models to make all of this affordable to the rural poor.

Rioba says that "for solar to be more attractive in Africa, there are a number of challenges. On the technology side, to make products which are both durable and affordable to the masses. Such new products such as LED lighting may ultimately reduce the size of the solar system and hence the cost."

In Laos, the rental mode is also proving effective. Only 48 percent of the country's 5.7 million people have access to electricity, and most turn to firewood and kerosene for light and energy. Over 74 percent of people live on less than US \$2 a day and could not afford to buy a solar-power system outright.

The company [Sunlabob](#) rents solar-powered lanterns for prices beginning at 35,000 kip (US \$3.80) per month, lower than the 36,000 to 60,000 kip (US \$4.00 to US \$6.60) per months households typically pay for kerosene fuel. After 10 hours' use, the lanterns are recharged for a small fee from the village's central solar-power collection facility. All fees go towards maintaining the central solar recharging station. The equipment is rented to a village-appointed Village Energy Committee, which sub-leases it to households at prices it sets. Rent covers all costs, including replacements and operational

servicing costs. In the event of breakdowns, rent payments are suspended until repairs are made.

Sunlabob has installed over 5,600 solar power systems since 2000 in over 450 villages and is also working in Cambodia and Indonesia.

"Sunlabob really works well with local people," says Bouathep Malaykham, head of the Lao Government Rural Electrification Program. "Because they are a private company they can make things happen quickly."

In Bangladesh, more than 230,000 households are now using solar power systems thanks to the government's Infrastructure Development Company Ltd. (IDCOL), giving rise to opportunities for a whole new generation of entrepreneurs to make use of this new power supply for the poor. IDCOL is run by the Ministry of Finance, and is on course to install 1 million Solar Household Systems (SHS) using solar panels by 2012. The Bangladeshi government is hoping to bring electricity to all its citizens by 2020 - meaning this is now a prime time for entrepreneurs specializing in providing energy efficient products to the poor.

The Executive Director of IDCOL, Ehsanl Haque, told a recent press conference: "SHS system, containing photo voltaic panels, battery, charge controller, solar lamp and switch, is a convenient mode for supply of power for small electrical loads such as lights, radio, cassette players and black and white TV."

It doesn't provide electricity 24 hours a day, but Haque says even with a few hours of electricity available each day, the rural economy is being transformed. "Now they are using SHS for income-generating activities and working hours have been increased for small businessmen, weavers, tailors, hairdressers, and makers of handicraft items."

Among the many benefits of the electricity has been the ability to listen to radio and watch TV: an activity women reported made them feel safer at night.

LINKS:

- Lighting Africa: this website run by the World Bank is a virtual business community and has forums, market intelligence, access to grants, network and partnership opportunities.
Website: <http://lightingafrica.org/index.cfm?Page=Home>
- D.light Design is dedicated to bringing modern lighting and power to over 1.6 billion people globally currently living without electricity. They aim to be the number one player in off-grid lighting and power solutions worldwide.
Website: <http://www.dlightdesign.com/>
- Solar Power Answers is a one-stop-shop for everything to do with solar power. It has a design manual and guides to the complex world of solar

power equipment.

Website: <http://www.solar-power-answers.co.uk/index.php>

In this issue:

- [Solar Power Bringing Light and Opportunity to the Poor](#)
- [Computer 'Gold Farming' Turning Virtual Reality into Real Profits](#)
- [Farmers Weather Fertilizer Crisis by Going Organic](#)
- [Urban Farmers Gain from Waste Water](#)

Computer 'Gold Farming' Turning Virtual Reality into Real Profits

The rapid spread of the internet around the global South is bringing with it new forms of work. One of these trends is so-called "gold farming": making money in the virtual world of computer gaming by trading in virtual money, prizes and goods for busy gamers who don't have time to do it themselves. This work now employs 400,000 people - mostly men and mostly in China, but also elsewhere in the South, according to a [new report](#).

Working out of internet centres where they can get access to high-speed or broadband internet connections, "gold farmers" use the global trade in virtual goods for online computer games in the same way stockbrokers trade shares on the world's stock exchanges. The trade operates similarly to the stock market, with prices fluctuating based on demand and changing by the minute.

And as the report discovered, this trade is acting as a gateway into the world of information technology employment, where computer-literate young men are able to earn an income they could not have done otherwise.

It is a trade that can provide gold farmers with US \$145 a month in income. They are often given free food and accommodation to do it, and many have few other economic choices.

"You can probably think of two models," said the report's author, Professor Richard Heeks of Manchester University's Development Informatics Group. "They could play as an individual at a local cybercafe doing their own in-game farming and then selling to one of the trading sites (that buy from farmers at one price, then sell on to player-buyers at a higher price). Or they could be organized into a small/medium enterprise by an owner, all working together in a room full of computers."

There is a dark side to gold farming too: there have been reports of youths forced to gold farm by gangs who make them work 12 hour days. Crime gangs sometimes become involved and scams proliferate.

Heeks says the downside is the result of governmental ignorance. "The main problem is a lack of understanding about ICT and ICT enterprise generally in some governments in developing countries and in particular a relative lack of understanding about the spread and implications of computer games."

Supporters see gold farming as a flourishing Southern economy that is worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and exposes participants both to information technology skills and the wide horizons of the virtual computing world. Its defenders say it shows that those who dismiss the expansion of IT infrastructure as a waste of time are missing the emerging economic opportunities it is creating.

Heeks said we still know too little about this fast-evolving sector, but that "gold farming does seem to be providing income/livelihood for young men who would otherwise be unemployed. There are claims that it has helped mop up youths who had otherwise been involved in crime, but we don't yet know how generalized such claims are."

The number of players engaged in online gaming has grown by 80 percent per year, and Heeks sees the rise in gold farming as linked to a bigger trend: "in both North and South, we will spend increasing amounts of work and leisure time in cyberspace. Couple that with the growing penetration of ICTs into developing countries, including into poor communities, and there will be growing opportunities for this kind of 'virtual outsourcing.'"

Currently, more than 300 million people worldwide have access to the internet through fast broadband connections (mostly in developed countries, although this is changing quickly), and more than 1.1 billion of the world's estimated 6.6 billion people are online.

China is working hard to capture the economic power of the internet. The country's economic boom has helped create an affluent urban middle class clamouring for the social aspects of internet access like chat rooms, while the government has been driving the roll-out of internet access in rural areas.

The country's largest Cyber Park is under construction in [Wujin New and High-tech Development Zone of Changzhou](#). It will be a technology incubator, a research and development centre, and a place for small and medium-sized enterprises to innovate.

China's most ambitious digital media industry development is the Beijing [Cyber Recreation District \(CRD\)](#), a collection of digital media academies and company incubators spread over 100 square kilometres, creating the world's largest virtual world development. It is already home to more than 200 game and multimedia content producers in western Beijing.

And even in Africa, where broadband penetration rates are very poor, countries are now looking to the mobile phone companies to provide their populations with access to the internet, as they struggle to find a place at the digital table.

Mauritius, an island in the Indian Ocean strategically close to Africa and better known for tourism and luxury hotels, wants to become the world's "cyber island", and Africa's e-gateway. Armed with the first 3G network in Africa (the third generation of mobile phone technology - offering high-speed internet

access and video telephony), Mauritius is moving fast to make good on this advantage. And it is even moving to the next level of mobile-phone speed, High-speed Download Packet Access (HSDPA) - allowing even greater quantities of information to be exchanged.

Mauritius joins a select few countries, including Japan and South Korea, at the forefront of access to 3G. Wireless - or wi-fi - computer access is available in three-quarters of the island.

LINKS:

- The paper in its entirety can be read here.
Website: sed.manchester.ac.uk
- A website dedicated to showing the current prices for World of Warcraft 'gold'.
Website: www.world-of-warcraft-gold.com
- Gold Farming: A documentary looking into all aspects of gold farming and its impact.
Website: www.chinesegoldfarmers.com
- Stanford University in California hosted the Virtual Goods Summit 2007 - Virtual Goods, Real Opportunity - and there is a packed website with video of the talks and details on opportunities to make money in the virtual world.
Website: www.vgsummit.com
- The Cyber Cities Reader: the first book to bring together a vast range of debates and examples of ICT-based city changes.
Website: books.google.co.uk

Farmers Weather Fertilizer Crisis by Going Organic

Around the world, large-scale agriculture relies on the use of chemical fertilizers. But increasing expense and decreasing supply of fertilizer is driving up the cost of food, and in turn contributing to the overall food crisis.

According to a soon-to-be-released UN report, prices have shot up and will stay high for at least three years. Prices have almost doubled and in some cases risen by 500 percent over 15 months.

The fertilizer crisis is caused by several factors. Anhydrous ammonia, which is the source of nearly all nitrogen fertilizer, needs natural gas, and the price of gas has risen sharply. Other fertilizer ingredients like phosphorous, potassium and potash are also increasingly expensive. Fertilizer needs to be transported long distances to get to farmers, so costs have risen with the soaring price of oil. And finally, the rise in demand for food has put the price of fertilizer up, as countries hoard supplies for themselves.

The 1960s 'Green Revolution' in agriculture made developing-world farmers dependent on supplies of fertilizers, pesticides and artificial irrigation. Monoculture cash crops became the norm. Yields were doubled, but at the expense of using three times as much water by accessing groundwater using

electric pumps. This and fertilizer pollution has caused widespread damage to soil and water. In India, for example, 57 per cent of the land is degraded, according to Tata Energy Research.

In Cambodia, farmers are reaching back to past practices for answers to the fertilizer crisis. One is to go organic. Taking this approach has many health and environmental advantages - and, best of all for farmers, it keeps costs down.

Khim Siphay, a Cambodian farmer, has found he gets bigger crops of rice and vegetables while paying a lot less for fertilizers.

"Using pesticide or fertilizers kills important insects, and causes the soil to become polluted," he told Reuters. "I use compost and it helps keep the soil good from one year to another. All of my family members help make the compost."

The push to organic methods for Cambodia's 13 million people relying on agriculture for a living comes from a non-governmental organization, the [Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture \(CEDAC\)](#). It has successfully moved to organic methods, starting from just a handful of 28 farmers in 2000, to the current 60,000 - and received an endorsement from the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture.

CEDAC says farms using the organic methods have been able to increase rice yields per hectare, while the seeds needed have fallen by 70 to 80 percent. By using a "[System of Rice Intensification](#)", the mostly small-scale farmers are able to get more out of the land, with less labour. Add to that the fact that organic rice gets a premium price on world markets, and the result for the farmers has been a rise in income from US \$58 to US \$172 per hectare.

"The important point of organic farming is that farmers don't need to spend money on fertilizers and pesticide so they spend less money on farming," said CEDAC official Yang Saing Koma.

"They can sell the produce for a higher price. Also they can avoid being infected by pesticides and they will be healthier. It is also good for the environment," he said.

Rice and other produce can be used to feed chickens to produce organic poultry and eggs - another bonus for farmers looking to raise the value of their produce.

"I started doing organic farming outside my rice paddy, but then I noticed production was double, so in the next season, I decided to grow organically on all of my land," said farmer Ros Meo. "I spend less money now and I can grow more and I am not sick as I was before, my health is now good."

Going organic in Cambodia is something that is becoming more attractive to the country's growing middle class, and the government hopes the country will gain a reputation as an organic producer.

Another approach to cheap fertilizer comes from Caracas, Venezuela. [Marjetica Potrc](#), an artist and architect who works closely with impoverished communities, has come up with a "[dry toilet](#)" which collects human waste and converts it to fertilizer.

Developed after spending six months in the barrios of Caracas, the dry, ecologically safe toilet was built on the upper part of La Vega barrio, a district in the city without access to the municipal water grid. It is a place where about half the population receives water from municipal authorities no more than two days a week.

LINKS:

- South African company Eat Your Garden: It provides urban dwellers and food businesses with their own food gardens bursting with juicy and tasty foods whilst at the same time reducing carbon footprints, and creating employment and provide training, helping poverty alleviation.
Website: <http://www.eatyourgarden.co.za/>
- Soil Association: The organization that establishes the standards necessary for food to be called organically grown.
Website: <http://www.soilassociation.org/>
- Patrick Kamzitu, a farmer in Malawi, on the impact of fertilizer prices:
Website: www.guardian.co.uk/environment

Urban Farmers Gain from Waste Water

The global food crisis continues to fuel food price inflation and send many into hunger and despair. Around the world, solutions are being sought to the urgent need for more food and cheaper food. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called for food production to increase 50 percent by 2030 just to meet rising demand - and right now there are 862 million people undernourished (FAO).

One fast-growing solution is bringing farming to urban and semi-urban spaces, where the majority of the world's population now lives.

Urban farmers can take advantage of their close proximity to consumers, keeping costs down and profits up. They can also solve one of agriculture's enduring problems - where to find water for irrigation by using existing waste water. Waste water is plentiful in urban environments, where factories usually pump out waste water into streams, rivers and lakes.

The amount of urban farmed agriculture is still small, about 10 percent of the world's agricultural production, but is a potential growth area if handled well. In 53 cities surveyed by the [International Water Management Institute](#), 1.1

million farmers - some 200 million worldwide - are now using recycled or waste water to irrigate their crops.

In Accra, Ghana, more than 200,000 people depend on food grown with wastewater. In Pakistan, a full quarter of the grown vegetables use wastewater.

The use of waste water comes with its ups and downs. While the World Health Organization rightfully points out that waste water can be a source of disease and pollution, cities also face a dilemma: diverting fresh water to irrigate crops means less for people to drink. Out of the 53 cities surveyed by the International Water Management Institute, 85 percent dumped their raw sewage and wastewater into streams and lakes. With this in mind, the [WHO](#) has altered its stance on wastewater, and now supports its use for irrigating farmland as long as all efforts are made to treat wastewater and that people are warned to thoroughly wash food before eating it.

Pay Drechsel, who heads the IWMI's research division based in Accra, Ghana, studying safe and productive use of low-quality water, says sophisticated systems to use waste water have developed in Vietnam, China and India, "where this practice has been going on for centuries."

"People know how to avoid health risks, like thorough cooking of vegetables," he said. "In Vietnam and China, waste from households (fecal waste, solid waste and wastewater from household use) have always been effectively recycled in 'closed systems' at a household level where the waste/nutrients are recycled into the food chain and so return for human consumption."

Drechsel cites examples like Calcutta, where a large wetland is being used for treating and recycling wastewater for beneficial uses such as fish farming. In Northern Ghana, fecal sludge from septic tanks is spread on fields that are later used to grow cereals.

"The risk for the consumer is extremely low, a waste product is productively recycled, the farmer has a good harvest and the city gets rid of their waste," Drechsel said. "A multiple win-win situation."

"Depending on the local situations such models can be widely used, provided they are documented and the risk factors are controlled," he added.

Farmers use various methods to reduce the risk of contamination, including drip irrigation where the water does not touch the crop.

The risks for both farmers and consumer can be managed with the right protocols. For farmers, Drechsel recommends wearing of rubber boots and careful hand washing to avoid skin diseases. He points out that these farmers usually make more money than those who do not use waste water, and thus can afford the extra cost of precautionary measures, like de-worming tablets. They can quickly get out of poverty by using this water.

For consumers, the risk is from diarrhoea, typhus or cholera if raw food is eaten unwashed or poorly washed. The best solution is to turn to the WHO's guidelines and proven local practices and tested techniques developed by researchers.

"Here more awareness creation on invisible risks through pathogens is needed. Perception studies in West Africa showed that nearly all households wash vegetables but they target visible dirt. Thus, the methods used are not effective. Best would be therefore a combination of risk reducing interventions from farm to fork, as none alone is 100 percent efficient. This is also what the new WHO guidelines promote: a flexible approach, reducing in each country the health risks as far as it is possible and feasible."

Drechsel sees an opportunity for water treatment plants to seize: "What is missing so far is a 'design for reuse.' If treatment plants would be designed to serve farmers they could be less sophisticated and easier to maintain. Farmers could be involved in this, maybe a win-win situation.

"The environment benefits too. Spreading wastewater over fields, and allowing it to leach back through the soil into local waterways, turns out to be a reasonable way to purify it. The process filters out all the organic contaminants, and much of the nitrogen and phosphates that would otherwise contribute to algal blooms and dead zones further downstream. It is certainly preferable to dumping wastewater straight into the nearest big river or lake."

LINKS:

- Vertical farming, where hothouses are piled one on top of the other, is an option being promoted as a solution to the food needs of urban dwellers.
Website: <http://www.verticalfarm.com/>
- Extensive photographs of vertical farm project concepts by Chris Jacobs in cooperation with the grandfather of skyscraper farm concepts: Dr. Dickson Despommier of Columbia University. His ideal: all-in-one eco-towers would actually produce more energy, water (via condensation/purification) and food than their occupants would consume. His mission: to gather architects, engineers, economists and urban planners to develop a sustainable and high-tech wonder of ecological engineering.
Website: weburbanist.com
- Urban Gardening News, a news service providing a review of daily news targeting everyone involved in planning & practicing alternative farming in cities. Great updates on how things are progressing across the South.
Website: <http://www.urbanagriculture-news.com>

Comments

Window on the World

- **The Current Global Financial Turmoil and Asian Developing Countries**
by Yilmaz Akyuz, Publisher: TWN.
--The world economy is now in difficult straits as a result of the financial turmoil sparked by the subprime crisis in the United States. In this turbulent environment, prospects for sustaining global growth and stability seem to hinge more than ever on developing countries, particularly the emerging-market economies of Asia.
Website: <http://www.twnside.org.sg/title2/ge/ge11.htm>
- **African Telecommunication/ICT Indicators 2008 Publisher: ITU.**
--This report is an indispensable reference book of telecommunication facts and figures for the region. The publication provides an overview of market trends, including in the area of fixed, mobile and Internet services. It looks at the availability of ICTs in households and highlights the importance of community access to ICTs.
Website: <http://www.itu.int/publ/D-IND-AF-2008/en>
- **Untangling links between trade, poverty and gender: Latin American experience shows women need support to benefit from trade liberalisation**
by Nicola Jones, Publisher: Overseas Development Institute.
Website: www.odi.org.uk
- **Rising food prices: A global crisis**
by Steve Wiggins and Stephanie Levy, Publisher: Overseas Development Institute.
Website: www.odi.org.uk
- **The political economy of pro-poor growth: The challenge of making growth pro-poor**
by Kate Bird, Publisher: Overseas Development Institute.
Website: www.odi.org.uk
- **Supporting pro-poor growth processes: Implications for donors: Policies and programmes to strengthen the productive capacities of poor people** by Eva Ludi and Kate Bird, Publisher: Overseas Development Institute.
Website: www.odi.org.uk
- **Pro-poor growth and development: Linking economic growth and poverty reduction**
by Steve Wiggins and Kate Higgins, Publisher: Overseas Development Institute.
Website: www.odi.org.uk
- **God and Gold: Britain, America and the Making of the Modern World**
by Walter Russell Mead, Publisher: Atlantic.
Website: www.amazon.com

Upcoming Events

October

- **World Conservation Congress 2008**
Barcelona, Spain (5-14 October 2008)
--Held every four years, the World Conservation Congress is one of the world's most important events devoted to improving our natural environment for human, social and economic development. More than 8,000 leaders from governments, NGOs, business, UN agencies, scientific domains and community groups are expected to attend.
Website: www.iucn.org/congress/2008/index.htm
- **Carbon Finance 2008**
London, United Kingdom (9-11 Oct. 2008)
--This event will provide an in-depth update on the global carbon markets. Attend to hear top-level industry speakers give a full global carbon update - the outlook for the Kyoto process, recent legislation and emissions trading activity on an international level. Participate in nine brainstorming roundtable discussions, and numerous thought-provoking panel sessions.
Website: www.environmental-finance.com
- **MobileActive08**
Johannesburg, South Africa (13-15 October 2008)
--Do you have expertise in the field of mobile technologies for social development? Are you a researcher with research findings to showcase about mobile technology for social impact? Are you a mobile service provider with specific products to exhibit that benefit the social market? If so, we invite you to submit your ideas to be part of MobileActive08! DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: June 30
Website: <http://e2ma.net>
- **WEFTEC 2008**
Chicago, USA (18-22 October 2008)
--The Water Environment Federation's Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference, is the largest conference of its kind in North America and offers water quality professionals from around the world with outstanding water quality education and training.
Website: www.weftec.org
- **BioMarine 2008**
Marseille, France (20-24 October 2008)
--Biomarine is a worldwide initiative that helps nurturing innovative solutions to advance ocean sustainability, bringing together business, science, government, civil society and the media. This Forum is the official marine event of the French Presidency of the European Union.
Website: www.biomarine.org/
- **Create in China Conference**
London, UK (22 October 2008)
--For the first time in the UK, the Create in China conference will provide real insight and practical knowledge into UK-China media business relations. At a pivotal time in the economic and creative development of China, we will bring together the people forging global

partnerships and championing opportunities.

Website: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/createinchina/why.attend>

- **ReThinking Transportation for a Sustainable Future**
Louisville, KY, USA (28-29 Oct. 2008)
--This conference is designed to foster communication between academics and professionals working on energy and transportation issues, introduce new techniques and policies for energy and transportation sustainability and have attendees contribute to the development of a common language and collective vision for a sustainable set of energy and transportation policies.
Website: <http://www.rethinkingtransportation.com/>

November

- **CSR Asia Summit 2008**
Bangkok, Thailand (3-4 November 2008)
--Amidst a growing call for companies to engage with CSR initiatives in Asia, the event is poised to explore hot topics unique to the Asian context, which would bring new insights for businesses, governments, NGOs and other CSR practitioners.
Website: <http://www.csr-asia.com/summit08/>
- **Fourth Session of the World Urban Forum**
Nanjing, China (3-7 November 2008)
--The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing issues facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies. It is projected that in the next fifty years, two-thirds of humanity will be living in towns and cities. A major challenge is to minimize burgeoning poverty in cities, improve the urban poor's access to basic facilities such as shelter, clean water and sanitation and achieve environment-friendly, sustainable urban growth and development.
Website: www.unhabitat.org
- **Making Trade Work for Development in Latin America 2008**
London, UK (10 November 2008)
--Two decades of deepening trade liberalization and expanding trade flows in Latin America have brought growth and improvements in efficiency in key sectors; but poverty remains a big issue in the region. This conference will look at ways in which trade agreements can be used to enhance development and ensure that benefits from trade reach the poorest.
Website: www.chathamhouse.org.uk
- **South Africa: The Power of Movements – Announcement and call for proposals**
Cape Town, South Africa (14-17 November 2008)
--Up to 1,500 women's rights activists from around the world will gather to debate and strategize about how to build a stronger global women's movement. Proposals are sought for organizing a session.
Website: www.awid.org
- **Green Manufacturing India 2008**
Mumbai, India (17-18 November 2008)

--This conference will demonstrate factors that are necessitating the move environmental free strategies in manufacturing industry. Participants will learn the best and new practices, which are required establishing high standards in their manufacturing process, as the conference would bring world-class industry practitioners to share their analysis plus to address the new solutions in order to improve the manufacturing world with clean and also preserving our natural resources for the future.

Website: www.marcusevans.com

- **Global Entrepreneurship Week**

Around the world (17-23 November 2008)

--For one week, millions of young people around the world will join a growing movement of entrepreneurial people to generate new ideas and to seek better ways of doing things. Dozens of countries are coming together for the first time to host Global Entrepreneurship Week, an initiative to inspire young people to embrace innovation, imagination and creativity. To think big. To turn their ideas into reality. To make their mark.

Website: <http://unleashingideas.org/welcome>

- **Water and Business Summit 2008**

London, UK (26-27 November 2008)

--With an emphasis on interactivity, the conference will be an opportunity for business leaders to question water experts on the likely impact water scarcity will have on their company, and the future of responsible water stewardship.

Website: www.ethicalcorp.com/conferences/

December

- **United Nations Climate Change Conference**

Poznan, Poland (1-12 December 2008)

--The intergovernmental negotiation process primarily encompasses the Conference of the Parties, the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, Subsidiary Bodies meetings and a series of workshops. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the "supreme body" of the Convention; it is the highest decision-making authority. It is an association of all the countries that are Parties to the Convention.

Website: unfccc.int/meetings/items/2654.php

March 2009

- **Fair Trade Business Conference 2009**

Portland, Oregon, USA (27-29 March 2009)

--As it celebrates its 15th birthday, the Fair Trade Federation will bring together leaders in the field of fair trade and social enterprise to discuss key issues and offer practical training to improve operations.

Website: www.FairTradeFederation.org

Training Opportunities

ONGOING

- **Grameen Bank Microcredit Training Programs**
[Grameen Info](#)
- **MDI - East Africa: Community-Managed Microfinance: A new and sustainable approach to microfinance for the poor and Pro-poor enterprise development seminar**
Belinda Ocean Resort, Jangwani Beach, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (20 October to 1 November 2008)
- **Two Workshops Offered for Development Practitioners**
--The community-managed microfinance course deals with providing sustainable financial services for the very poor. Although MFIs are well-established, they have mostly failed to penetrate remote rural areas because the costs are too high and the demand for credit too small. Meanwhile, over the last 15 years, massive, sustainable programmes have emerged that reach this target group at very low cost, based on autonomous, small-scale savings and loan associations. Co-sponsored by the SNHU Community Economic Development Masters Program at the Open University of Tanzania and VSL Associates
Website: [Click here](#)
- **The Citizen Journalism in Africa Programme**
--The Hivos/SANGONeT Civil Journalism in Africa Project aims at building the capacity of civil society organisations to use online and offline citizen journalism as a means of publication, lobby, networking and knowledge sharing with their constituencies. The focus will be on both traditional and new media. Special attention will be given to the development of sound and ethical journalistic, lobby, networking and publication skills. Supported by the European Union, the project will be implemented over the next three years.
Website: <http://www.citizenjournalismafrika.org/>
- **The Grassroots Reporting Project**
--One of our goals at AfriGadget (<http://www.afrigadget.com/>) is to find more stories of African ingenuity. The Grassroots Reporting Project is our plan to find, equip and train more AfriGadget reporters in the field throughout Africa. AfriGadget's goal is to leverage the power of current and emerging technology such as video cameras, digital cameras, laptops and phones to bring quality content online and eventually on television. A combination of mobile phones and computers will be assigned to individuals in 10 African countries for the purpose of getting more on-the-ground reporting of stories of African ingenuity to the world. An AfriGadget editor will be in charge of identifying the best candidates for inclusion in the program. This editor will also travel to each country to train and equip the new AfriGadget reporters for the program.
Website: <http://www.afrigadget.com/>
- **Preparation for the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra: Switzerland supports blog on ownership**
--In the run-up to the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which

will take place in Ghana in September, the governments of Switzerland and Colombia have launched a blog on the World Wide Web as a platform for discussion on the topic of "Country Ownership". The two countries are co-chairs of the roundtable which focuses on this issue.
Website: www.whoseownership.org

CAREERS

- **New Website Offers Career Advice to Young Africans**
--Set up by the Commonwealth Secretariat, Africancareerguidance.com is aimed at providing career guidance to African youth and helping them to link with prospective employers. AfricaRecruit is a human resources organisation that provides skills training for African professionals in the Diaspora and on the continent. The website has an inbuilt email subscriber list for all its users and offers a searchable database of career profiles for job seekers and prospective employers. It also offers skills and interest assessments and advice on CV and résumé preparation. It provides tips about interviewing techniques, as well as information on internship and volunteer opportunities, and entrepreneurial skills.
Website: www.africacareerguidance.com

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

- **Africa Entrepreneurship Platform**
--This ground breaking initiative is created as a forum to showcase innovative ideas and businesses from Africa that have the ability to scale internationally driving job creation and sustainable economic development between Africa and the Americas.
Website: www.sacca.biz
- **Piramal Foundation in India**
--Has established a US \$25,000 prize for ideas that help advance full access to effective public health care in India. The Piramal Prize is a \$25,000 Social Entrepreneurship Competition focused on democratizing health care in India that seeks to encourage and support bold entrepreneurial ideas which can profoundly impact access to higher standards of health for India's rural and marginalized urban communities. The award recognizes high-impact, scalable business models and innovative solutions that directly or indirectly address India's health-care crisis.
Website: www.piramalprize.org
- **The Pioneers of Prosperity Grant and Award**
--This competition is a partnership between the OTF Group and the John F. Templeton Foundation of the United States, and promotes companies in East Africa by identifying local role models that act as examples of sustainable businesses in their country/region. It is open to businesses from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda.

Five pioneers will receive US \$50,000 to re-invest in their business. It is open to for-profit businesses that provide high wages to their workers and that operate in sustainable ways.

Website: [Pioneers of Prosperity](#)

- **African Writers Fund**

--Together with the Ford Foundation, the Fund supports the work of independent creative writers living on the continent. The Fund recognizes the vital role that poets and novelists play in Africa by anticipating and reflecting the cultural, economic and political forces that continuously shape and reshape societies.

Website: <http://www.trustafrika.org>

- **Joint NAM S&T Centre - ICCS Fellowship Programme**

--Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre) and International Center for Chemical Sciences (ICCS), (H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry and Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research), University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan

Email: namstct@vsnl.com;
namstct@bol.net.in;
apknam@gmail.com;

Website: <http://www.scidev.net>

- **Oxford Said Business School Youth Business Development Competition**

--Open to youth between 16 and 21 across the world, the competition is run by students at Oxford University to promote social enterprise. A prize fund of £2,000 in seed capital is up for grabs. It calls itself the 'world's first global youth development competition'.

Click [here](#) for more information

- **US\$250,000 for Best Lab Design**

--AMD and Architecture for Humanity have announced a prize of \$250,000 for the best design for a computer lab that can be adapted and implemented in third-world countries.

The Open Architecture Prize is the largest prize in the field of architecture and is designed to be a multi-year program that will draw competition from design teams around the world.

Website: <http://www.openarchitecturenetwork.org/>

- **PhD Plant Breeding Scholarships at the University of Ghana**

The [University of Ghana](#) has been awarded a project support grant by the [Alliance for a Green Revolution](#) in Africa (a joint venture between the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, for the establishment of a West African Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI). This is available to scientists working at NARIs, universities and international centres in West Africa. Women scientists are especially encouraged to apply for a fellowship under this programme.

Website: <http://www.acci.org.za>

- **Institute of Social Studies in The Hague**
--A collaboration between 25 international think tanks in international development, [www.focuss.info](http://focuss.info) is a search engine for indexing and social book marking online resources in international development.
Website: <http://focuss.info/>
- **Genesis: India's Premier Social Entrepreneurship Competition**
--A social entrepreneurship competition aiming to bring together social entrepreneurs, students, NGOs, innovators, incubators, corporations and financiers and encourage them to come up with innovative ideas which are socially relevant and feasible.
Website: <http://genesis.iitm.ac.in/>
- **Echoing Green: Social Entrepreneurs Fund**
--They are looking for social entrepreneurs developing new solutions to social problems. They are accepting applications for their 2008 fellowships (two-year funding of up to US \$90,000 for 20 entrepreneurs).
Website: <http://www.echoinggreen.org/>
- **2008 Sustainable Banking Awards**
--The Financial Times, in partnership with IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, today launched the 2008 edition of the FT Sustainable Banking Awards, the leading awards for triple bottom line banking.

Two new categories - Banking at the Bottom of the Pyramid, and Sustainable Investor of the Year - have been added to the ground-breaking programme.

The awards, now in their third year, were created by the FT and IFC to recognise banks that have shown leadership and innovation in integrating social, environmental and corporate governance objectives into their operations.

Website: <http://www.ifc.org>

FUNDING

- **UNESCO: International Centre for South-South Co-operation in Science, Technology and Innovation**
--The International Centre for South-South Co-operation in Science, Technology and Innovation was inaugurated in Kuala Lumpur in May 2008. The centre functions under the auspices of UNESCO. It facilitates the integration of a developmental approach into national science and technology and innovation policies, and provides policy advice. In parallel to organizing capacity-building and the exchange of experience and best practices, the centre conducts research and tackles specific problems in science, technology and innovation policy-making in developing countries.
Website: www.unesco.org

- **Funding - Google.org**
--While SMEs in rich countries represent half of GDP, they are largely absent from the formal economies of developing countries. Today, there are trillions of investment dollars chasing returns – and SMEs are a potentially high impact, high return investment. However, only a trickle of this capital currently reaches SMEs in developing countries. Our goal is to increase this flow.

We want to show that SMEs can be profitable investments. We will do this by focusing on lowering transaction costs, deepening capital markets to increase liquidity, and catalyzing capital for investment.
Website: www.google.org

- **Challenge InnoCentive**
--A challenge to the world's inventors to find solutions to real scientific and technological problems affecting the poor and vulnerable.
Website: <http://www.innocentive.com/>
You can read more about the challenges here:
<http://www.rockfound.org>
- **Global Social Benefit Incubator: A US \$20,000 Bottom of the Pyramid Scholarship**
--Offered by Santa Clara University's Global Social Benefit Incubator, it selects 15 to 20 enterprises from developing countries and provides an eight-month mentoring process. This ends with a 10-day process in Santa Clara, where entrepreneurs work with their mentors.
Website: www.socialedge.org

Job Opportunities

- [Africa Recruit Job Compendium](#)
- [Africa Union](#)
- [CARE](#)
- [Christian Children's Fund](#)
- [ECOWAS](#)
- [International Crisis Group](#)
- [International Medical Corps](#)
- [International Rescue Committee](#)
- [Internews](#)
- [IREX](#)
- [Organization for International Migration](#)
- [Oxfam](#)
- [Relief Web Job Compendium \(UN OCHA\) \(1\)](#)
- [Relief Web Job Compendium \(UN OCHA\) \(2\)](#)
- [Save the Children](#)
- [The Development Executive Group job compendium](#)
- [Trust Africa](#)

- [UN Jobs](#)
- [UNDP](#)
- [UNESCO](#)
- [UNICEF](#)
- [World Bank](#)
- [World Wildlife Fund \(Cameroon\)](#)

Please feel free to send your comments, feedback and/or suggestions to Cosmas Gitta
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